

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for detecting non-clinically diagnosed cancer in a patient, the method comprising:
 - 5 extracting blood serum or plasma from the patient;
 - detecting beta-catenin RNA in the blood serum or plasma; and
 - determining the presence of the cancer based on the detected beta-catenin RNA.
- 10 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein determining the presence of the cancer comprises determining the presence of colorectal cancer based on the detected beta-catenin RNA.
3. A method according to claim 2, wherein determining the presence of
 - 15 colorectal cancer comprises detecting pre-neoplastic colorectal polyps based on the detected beta-catenin RNA.
4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the RNA is derived from one of the group consisting of:
 - 20 gene-encoded beta-catenin,
 - gene-encoded alpha-catenin,
 - gene-encoded E-catherin, and
 - other gene-encoded beta-catenin associated proteins.
- 25 5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the patient is a human or animal.
6. A method for detecting non-clinically diagnosed cancer in a patient, the method comprising:
 - 30 extracting blood serum or plasma from the patient;
 - detecting beta-catenin DNA in the blood serum or plasma; and
 - determining the presence of the cancer based on the detected beta-catenin DNA.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein determining the presence of the cancer comprises determining the presence of colorectal cancer based on the detected beta-catenin DNA.
- 5 8. A method according to claim 7, wherein determining the presence of colorectal cancer comprises detecting pre-neoplastic colorectal polyps based on the detected beta-catenin DNA.
9. A method according to claim 6, wherein the DNA is derived from one of the
10 group consisting of:
gene-encoded beta-catenin,
gene-encoded alpha-catenin,
gene-encoded E-catherin, and
other gene-encoded beta-catenin associated proteins.
- 15 10. A method according to claim 6, wherein the patient is a human or animal.
11. A method for detecting non-clinically diagnosed cancer in a patient, the method comprising:
20 extracting blood serum or plasma from the patient;
detecting beta-catenin-associated gene RNA in the blood serum or plasma; and
determining the presence of the cancer based on the detected beta-catenin-associated gene RNA.
- 25 12. A method according to claim 11, wherein determining the presence of the cancer comprises determining the presence of colorectal cancer based on the detected beta-catenin-associated gene RNA.
13. A method according to claim 12, wherein determining the presence of
30 colorectal cancer comprises detecting pre-neoplastic colorectal polyps based on the detected beta-catenin-associated gene RNA.
14. A method according to claim 11, wherein the RNA is derived from one of the group consisting of:

gene-encoded beta-catenin,
gene-encoded alpha-catenin,
gene-encoded E-catherin, and
other gene-encoded beta-catenin associated proteins.

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15. A method according to claim 11, wherein the patient is a human or animal.

16. A method for detecting non-clinically diagnosed cancer in a patient, the
10 method comprising:

extracting blood serum or plasma from the patient;

detecting beta-catenin-associated gene DNA in the blood serum or plasma;

and

determining the presence of the cancer based on the detected beta-catenin-

15 associated gene DNA.

17. A method according to claim 16, wherein determining the presence of the
cancer comprises determining the presence of colorectal cancer based on the detected
beta-catenin-associated gene DNA.

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18. A method according to claim 17, wherein determining the presence of
colorectal cancer comprises detecting pre-neoplastic colorectal polyps based on the
detected beta-catenin-associated gene DNA.

25 19. A method according to claim 16, wherein the DNA is derived from one of the
group consisting of:

gene-encoded beta-catenin,

gene-encoded alpha-catenin,

gene-encoded E-catherin, and

30 other gene-encoded beta-catenin associated proteins.

20. A method according to claim 16, wherein the patient is a human or animal.